THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Suggestions were invited from the public in connection with the Budget for 1986-87. The suggestions received related mainly to tax concessions, incentives and fixing the size of the Annual Plan 1986-87. Such suggestions are received before the formulation of the Budget every year and are taken note of to the extent feasible while formulating the Budget of that year.

Evasion of Customs duty by a Bombay based company

*113. SHRI VIREN J SHAH:

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state;

Ca) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item which appeared in the Indian Express published from Bombay dated December 5, 1990 to the effect that officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence have unearthed an alleged fraud by a Bombay based company importing seamless pipes and tubes and stainless steel covers for supply to the ONGC without paying any customs duty;

(b) whether ft is also a fact that these items were not used for the purpose for which these were imported and whether the customs duty evaded amounted to Rs. 7 crores; and

(c) if so, what action is being taken against the company?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) • (a) Yes, Sir..

(b) and (c) Acting on intelligence reports, the Officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence searched the sffice and factory premises of the Arm •lis, P. J. Pipes and Vessels (P) Ltd. on 3rd November, 1990. The firm had reportedly imported 548 M. T. of stainless steel plates without payment of duty during the period from October, 1989 to March, 1990, under Special Imprest Licences read with Customs Exemption Notifications, with the condition that the stainless steel plates will be used in the manufacture of casing pipe connectors and thread protectors for being supplied to M/s. ONGC. The firm had reportedly not manufactured the end product using stainless steel and had sold about 277 M. T of the imported stainless steel plates in the local market. The balance quantity of about 271 M. T have been seized. Further investigations into the case are still in progress.

Assistance to small scale industries by SIDBI

*113-A. DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN;

SHRI BAL RAM SINGH YADAVA':

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Small Industries Development Bank of India has recently introduced a scheme for assistance to the small scale industries;

(b) if 96, the industries proposed to be given, assistance under this scheme; and

(te) \vftether assistance to various States is being given under the scheme, and if so, the names of such States where industries have benefited and the amount of assistance given?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has introduced 5 new schemes for the benefit of units in the small scale sector since July. 1990. Of these, the latest scheme is for direct assistance for development of industrial areas. Under this scheme,

term loan assistance will be extended by SIDBI to State Small Industries Development Corporations, State Infrastructure Development Corporations and other such corporations or authorities engaged in developing industrial areas exclusively for the SSI sector. Preference under the scheme will be given to those projects which are located in rural and semiurban areas or centrally notified backward districts.

(c) All the States and Union Territories are eligible for assistance under this scheme, which has been introduced by SIDBI only on the 4th of December, 1990. Sanctions are yet to be accorded under this scheme.

Winding up of Export Inspection Agency

*114. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have decided to wind up the Export Inspection Agency; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for taking such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Possibility of closure of small foundry units due to hike in import duty on pig iron

*115. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE; Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that small foundry units are on the verge of closure because of the increase in import duty on pig iron and curtailment of its domestic production by Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) whether any representation has been received by Government for reduction in customs duty on imported pig iron, if so, what action have been taken thereon; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to help these small foundry units?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI ASHOKE KUMAR SEN): (a) Auxiliary import duty on pig iron was increased only wr. e. f. 15th December, 1990, along with several other items, and thus closure of foundry units on this account does not arise.

Production of pig iron by SAIL in 1990-91, so far, has decreased. Hew-ever, total production of pig iron in the country upto November, 1990 has increased by 4. 8 per cent over the cor-responsing period of last year.

(b) and (c) In response to several representations received from Associations of foundry units and State Governments for reduction in custom! duty on imported pig iron, the Gov eminent had reduced the import duty on pig iron from 45 per cent *ad valorem* to 20 per cent *ad valorem* with effect from 20th September, 199U for import of 2 lakh tonnes of foundry grade pig iron by MMTC.

Production of Pig Iron is delicensed. Government is encouraging pig iron production in the secondary sector.

Use of electronic voting machine and issue of identity cards to voters

-116. SHRI OHATURANAN MISHRA:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM;

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the then Chief Election Commissioner, Mrs. Rama Devi held meeting with the Chief Electoral Officers of all the States and Union Territories;